

Claims

1. A method of retrieving an electronic message from a server (2) using a terminal device (1), the message (20) comprising a header (21) and a body (22) capable of containing characters, the method comprising the steps of:
  - establishing a communications link (6) between the server and the terminal device,
  - the server transmitting the header (21) and the first N characters (24) of the body to the terminal device, where N is a predetermined integer, while holding back any attachments (23),
  - the server transmitting a flag (30) indicative of any remaining characters (24) of the body and/or any attachments (23) to the terminal device.
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the flag (30) comprises a first flag (31) indicative of any remaining characters and a second flag (32) indicative of any attachments (23).
3. The method according to claim 1 or 2, comprising the further step of:
  - the terminal device (1) requesting, in response to the flag (30), the server (2) to transmit a further P characters (24) and/or a selected attachment (23).
4. The method according to claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the integer N is determined by the server.
5. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the server (2) erases the message after transmitting if there is no remaining text and no attachments.
6. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the server (2) retains the message if any remaining text or any attachments are not yet transmitted.

7. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the server (2) stores messages in a mailbox having a limited capacity, and wherein a partially transmitted messages is erased if additional mailbox capacity is required.
- 5 8. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the terminal device (1) is a mobile handset or a PDA.
9. A system (10) for retrieving electronic messages, the system comprising a server (2) and a terminal device (1), wherein the messages (20) comprise a header (21) and a body (22) capable of containing characters, the server and the terminal device being capable of establishing a communications link (6), wherein
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- the server is arranged for transmitting the header (21) and the first N characters (24) of the body to the terminal device, where N is a predetermined integer, while holding back any remaining characters and any attachments,
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- the server is arranged for transmitting a flag indicative of any remaining characters (24) of the body and any attachments (23) to the terminal device.
10. The system according to claim 9, wherein the flag (30) comprises a first flag (31) indicative of any remaining characters (24) and a second flag (32) indicative of any attachments (23).
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11. The system according to claim 9 or 10, wherein the terminal device (1) is arranged for requesting, in response to the flag (30), the server (2) to send a further P characters (24) and/or a selected attachment (23).
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12. A terminal device (1) for use in the system (10) of claims 9-11, the terminal device being capable of:
- establishing a communications link (6) with a server (2),
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- receiving the header (21) and the first N characters of the body (22) of a message (20), and

- receiving a flag (30) indicative of any remaining characters of the body (22) and any attachments (23) to the terminal device,

which terminal device (1) is arranged for requesting, in response to the flag, the server to send a further P characters and/or a selected attachment.

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13. The terminal device according to claim 12, arranged for mobile telephony.